

Los Angeles National Cemetery, Gate
(Los Angeles National Cemetery, Main Entrance Gate)
950 South Sepulveda Boulevard
Los Angeles
Los Angeles County
California

HABS No. CA-2709-B

HABS
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19-LOSAN,
79B-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
LOS ANGELES NATIONAL CEMETERY
GATE
(Main Entrance Gate)

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HABS No. CA-2709-B

Location: Los Angeles National Cemetery

950 South Sepulveda Boulevard
(Intersection of Sepulveda Boulevard and Constitution Avenue)
City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California 90049

U.S.G.S. Beverly Hills Quadrangle (7.5')
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 11.371720.3769660

Significance: The walled gate is one of several structures built on this cemetery site by the Work Projects Administration (WPA). It is also one of several on-site facilities of unique Spanish architectural motif using materials not typically associated with such architecture. It is the first structure seen by visitors who enter the cemetery through the main entrance on Constitution Avenue at Sepulveda Boulevard.

Description: The gateway is of Spanish architectural character that reflects the area's Spanish heritage. The design was executed, in part, using non-traditional materials for such an architectural motif. The use of red brick in a Spanish design is interesting and unique to the area. Several other building structures on the cemetery are constructed using the same architectural motif and materials.

The gateway walls and pilasters are constructed of unreinforced, interlaced kiln-fired red brick masonry units with pronounced slump mortar joints. The pilasters caps are unreinforced precast concrete. The low brick masonry walls between the pilasters are surmounted by panels of wrought-iron picket fence. The gate is a double leaf rolling gate of wrought-iron picket construction. Each leaf of the gate is surmounted by decorative wrought-iron scrolls and a wrought-iron circle at the center.

Historical Context: Little documented information has been identified or located regarding this facility. Construction of the walled gate is presumed to have been circa 1939-1940, when several other structures on the site that employ similar architectural and construction styles and identical materials were constructed, i.e., gatehouse (pumphouse), columbarium (and associated restrooms), pergola, maintenance facility, etc.

The names of any architects, engineers and/or other professional designers involved in the project are currently unknown; however, it is most probable that the designer(s) were professionals participating in the Work Projects Administration (WPA) program.

The first evidence of the gate's existence is in a photograph dated June 8, 1949, taken from west of the main gate looking east, depicting the gate in context with the adjacent gatehouse (pumphouse) and landscaping. Based on this photograph, significant alterations to the main entryway walls and gate have occurred over time such that the original walls and gate no longer exist. The lush landscaping has been removed. The roadway has been widened and the pilasters relocated. While the basic concept of the walls and gate has been

retained, many changes are evident. The pilasters have been modified or replaced, the brick wall height and configuration changed, the pedestrian gate removed, and the wrought-iron fence pattern changed. The current rolling wrought-iron gate is known to have been installed in the mid-1990s.

Sources: The only source of information relating to this structure and its uses is a photograph dated June 8, 1949.

Project Information: This survey is a donated recording project co-sponsored by the Veterans Park Nonprofit Corporation and the Los Angeles National Cemetery, National Cemetery Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs. The documentation was undertaken precedent to the demolition of the gate and walls to make way for the installation of a new main entrance to the cemetery. This new construction is necessary to alleviate a serious life-safety hazard occasioned by the configuration of the present main entrance, which does not meet current traffic or pedestrian safety standards. The intersection at the main entrance experiences an abnormally high vehicle accident rate, and is extremely hazardous to visitors -- both pedestrian and those arriving in vehicles.

This survey was prepared by the Construction Consultancy, 1450 East Seventeenth Street, Suite 226, Santa Ana, California, under the supervision of Mr. Stephen T. Sharr. The photographs were provided by Tom Zimmerman Photography, 10350 Ilona Avenue, Los Angeles, California, under the supervision of Mr. Tom Zimmerman.

The survey was prepared during the period March 1 – April 14, 2000.